



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

MINUTES

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

**Scottsdale Community Design Studio
7506 E Indian School Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251**

- PRESENT:** Vice-Chair Denise Pulk; Commissioners Don Ford, Marie Monroe, Mike Ragole, and Joel Stempil
- ABSENT:** Chairperson Pete Palmer and Commissioner Steve Ziomek
- STAFF:** Kelly Corsette, Communications/Public Affairs Director; Josh Austin, Assistant City Prosecutor
- GUESTS:** Morae Jordane, ASU student; Mary Michael Beltz, Post 44

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

Vice-Chair Pulk called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

Attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Discussion and possible action to approve February 5, 2020 Veterans Advisory Commission meeting minutes

COMMISSIONER RAGOLE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 5, 2020 VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER FORD SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FOUR (4) TO ZERO (0). VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS FORD, MONROE, AND RAGOLE VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES. COMMISSIONER STEMPIL NOT YET PRESENT.

3. Presentation and discussion: Scottsdale Veterans Court

Josh Austin, Assistant City Prosecutor, gave a presentation describing the East Valley Regional Veterans' Court. East Valley Regional Veterans' Court is a pre-adjudication rehabilitative court offering a coordinated effort to develop individualized treatment plans to address life situations encouraging misdemeanor criminal behavior by eligible service members and veterans. The purpose of the court is to address veterans' unique issues, connect veterans with veteran-specific benefits and resources, and to connect veterans with other veterans having similar experiences. Mr. Austin reviewed the application process and the typical Veterans' Court docket.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions throughout the presentation. Mr. Austin said that social workers are available through Veterans' Court who are able to direct participants who do not qualify for veterans' services to organizations for assistance.

Veterans' Court is strictly for those veterans who have received a misdemeanor violation. It does not address municipal code violations or federal offences. Brief discussion ensued regarding the likelihood of veterans following through with judge's orders, because they are conditioned and most comfortable following directions.

Mr. Austin said that community service opportunities are available to those veterans who have no underlying issues and is also ordered under circumstances such as if a court date is missed. Commissioner Ragole said that Post 44 would be interested in offering community service opportunities to those who are eligible.

Opportunities are available for veterans' family members to be engaged in the program.

Mr. Austin said that the program has grown exponentially over the past few years, and currently has approximately 60 active cases. There are both active duty and veteran participants of all age ranges in the program. An average of 85 percent of participants successfully graduate and recidivism rate is below 10 percent. Agencies nationwide have been engaging in rehabilitative court programs for both veterans and civilians. Veterans court programs tend to be more successful than civilian programs, because a variety of agencies focusing on veterans' issues are available for referral.

Volunteers are welcome to participate in the program by attending Veterans' Court docket to show support to the participants. It is hoped that in the future there will be opportunity for volunteer navigators. Navigators would be required to undergo extensive training.

4. Communication plan to support Veterans Advisory Commission work plan

This item was tabled at the request of staff.

5. Commission members' reports, updates and suggestions for future agenda items

Commissioner Ragole reported that Post 44 donated \$5,000 each to Mana House and Veterans' Furniture Center. Gannett News, USA Today will be filming at the post on March 14th. A segment will be included as part of a story on Arizona Lottery's contributions to local charities.

Commissioner Stempil said that while attending a MOAA meeting in February, he spoke with a retired brigadier general who expressed interest in learning more about the Veterans' Commission's efforts. He will reach out with an invitation to attend a VAC meeting and will offer to forward him information about the commission. He will also reach out to the Commander of the State Korean War Veterans, who works at the USO at Sky Harbor.

Commissioner Stempil suggested that an informational packet about programs available through Scottsdale, including the Veterans' Court, Fire Department, and Police Department programs, be prepared and made available for distribution to interested parties.

Commissioner Monroe suggested that the director of the military partnership at Honor Health be invited to speak. She and Vice-Chair Pulk recommended touring the training unit at Honor Health Osborn.

Mr. Corsette said that efforts are still underway to identify a volunteer to assist with work on behalf of the Commission. Commissioner Monroe inquired about whether as a Commissioner she would be able to volunteer in that capacity. Mr. Corsette will inquire with the legal department.

Mr. Corsette said that he will share the Smart Cities Strategic Roadmap report when it comes available.

6. Public Comment

Mary Michael Beltz, Post 44, said that she would be interested in hearing more information on programs that focus on female veterans.

Morae Jordane, ASU journalism student, gave a brief description of the topics she is focusing her writing on. Her articles are available for viewing on the Downtown Devil.

7. Adjournment

COMMISSIONER RAGOLE MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. COMMISSIONER MONROE SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0). VICE-CHAIR PULK, COMMISSIONERS FORD, MONROE, RAGOLE, AND STEMPILO VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

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